



8th Grade Intro to American Literature Summer Enrichment Activity

Summary of *My Brother Sam is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier

8th grade English covers American literature, starting with the colonists and ending with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. To introduce American culture and identity, the summer enrichment activity is *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, an American Revolutionary War novel about a young boy whose family is caught between both sides.

Enrichment Activity Directions:

As you read the book, annotate it as your notes will be helpful throughout this process. Once you have finished the book, you will write a brief, 2-page essay answer the question:

What does this book teach about American history at the time?

Though this is a personal question, please avoid using first and second person pronouns in your essay (ex. “I,” “we,” “us,” or “you”) when you talk about what the book teaches. The preference is that your essay should be typed, following the BFHS Writing Standards for Printed Work. However, hand written essays will be accepted, following the BFHS Writings Standards for Hand Written Work.

Important Details:

- **Due date:** First Day of School
- **Submission:** You will turn in your assignment in accordance with the expectations set forth by your teacher. This will be detailed on the class syllabus that you will have access to prior to the start of school.
- **Grading:** The assignment will be reviewed for completion. Teacher(s) may provide feedback to students at their discretion.
- Teachers will be using the summer readings during the first weeks back to school and teachers will be requiring the text be brought to class. Therefore, at a bare minimum, your student would benefit from completing the summer reading to prepare for the discussions that will ensue upon our return.



8th Grade Intro to American History Summer Enrichment Activity

Hero Tales from American History, by Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge

This book, written for young Americans, acquaints the reader with some of the most notable heroes in American history. The 26 separate stories highlight the particular character traits and the virtues of different men and how they influenced the American experience.

As an 8th grade student, you will be taking an introductory course in United States History. This assignment will prepare you for this endeavor and give us a jump start and overview of many of the concepts and ideas that are germane to our country's founding and continue to be critical to the perpetuation of a free people.

Enrichment Activity Directions:

In a 70-page spiral bound notebook, write a 1/2 page response to each section of the book. There are 26 sections, so you will have 26 entries. Start each new entry on the front side of a separate piece of paper in your notebook.

Think of your response journal as a conversation with yourself. You can record what you already knew, what you found interesting, what you feel passionate about, what you still do not completely understand, questions that you may have for your teacher when you return to school, etc. In depth responses will also reflect on the reading in light of the current state of our society. Do you see these kinds of heroes in today's world? Is America in danger of losing these heroism and statesmanship altogether? Have fun with your responses and THINK DEEPLY! Do not just summarize the reading – your teachers know what it says; we want to know what you think after digesting these concepts.

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